

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strike through~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 2, 17, 19 and 21-24 and ADD new claim 25 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An online shopping method, comprising:
previously generating/preparing article data in which features of an article picture and a data sending rank are related to each article picture as additional information;
upon receiving an article search by a user, generating article picture arrangement data of all search resultant article pictures in which the more similar features of the search resultant article pictures are to each other, the more closely the search resultant article pictures are disposed on a two-dimensional plane;
sending the article picture arrangement data to a user terminal, said article picture arrangement data being independent of the data sending rank;
sending the search resultant article pictures in accordance with the data sending rank;
and
at the user terminal, displaying each of the search resultant article picture at each arrangement position in accordance with the article picture arrangement data on a screen of as initial search results in a receiving order, thereby displaying an article picture with a higher data sending rank earlier at the arrangement position.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An online shopping method according to claim 1, wherein the article picture arrangement data is generated in accordance with a combination of a similarity of a feature of each resultant article picture and at least features of the article are any one selected from the group consisting of features of an article picture of the article, a keyword representing the features-feature of the article, and article classification information regarding classification of the article in accordance with the features thereof, or a combination thereof.

3. (ORIGINAL) An online shopping method according to claim 2, wherein the data sending rank is determined by an article provider.

4. (ORIGINAL) An online shopping method according to claim 2, wherein a service user previously selects items to be considered in purchasing an article and notifies a service provider of the selection, and

the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the notified items.

5. (ORIGINAL) An online shopping method according to claim 2, wherein a service provider previously analyzes items considered by a service user based on a past search history and a past purchase history of the service user, and

the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the analyzed items.

6. (ORIGINAL) An online shopping method according to claim 2, wherein a screen of article search results is presented to an article provider, and the article provider specifies a picture of an article which the article provider provides on the presented screen of article search results, thereby making it possible to access selling information of the article.

7. (ORIGINAL) An online shopping method according to claim 1, wherein the data sending rank is determined by an article provider.

8. (ORIGINAL) An online shopping method according to claim 1, wherein a service user previously selects items to be considered in purchasing an article and notifies a service provider of the selection, and

the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the notified items.

9. (ORIGINAL) An online shopping method according to claim 1, wherein a service provider previously analyzes items considered by a service user based on a past search history and a past purchase history of the service user, and

the service provider determines the data sending rank in accordance with the analyzed items.

10. (ORIGINAL) An online shopping method according to claim 1, wherein a screen of article search results is presented to an article provider, and the article provider specifies a picture of an article which the article provider provides on the presented screen of article search results, thereby making it possible to access selling information of the article.

11-16. (CANCELLED)

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An online shopping system for a user to search for and purchase an intended article from a number of articles,

a service providing system comprising:

an article data generating part for previously generating/preparing article data in which features of ~~the~~an article picture and a data sending rank are related to each article picture as additional information;

an article database for storing the article data;

a search processing part for searching the article database upon receiving an article search by a user;

an article picture arrangement data generating part for receiving search results of the search processing part and generating article picture arrangement data of all search resultant article pictures in which the more similar features of the search resultant article pictures are to each other, the more closely the search resultant article pictures are disposed on a two-dimensional plane, said article picture arrangement data being independent of the data sending rank, and

a data sending control part for sending the article picture arrangement data to a user terminal and sending the search resultant article pictures in accordance with the data sending rank information,

a user terminal comprising a display control part for displaying each of the search resultant article picture at each arrangement position in accordance with the article arrangement data on a screen ~~of~~as initial search results in a receiving order,

wherein an article picture with a higher data sending rank is displayed earlier at an arrangement position at the user terminal.

18. (ORIGINAL) An online shopping method according to claim 17, wherein the features of the article are any one selected from the group consisting of features of an article picture of the article, a keyword representing the features of the article, and article classification information regarding classification of the article in accordance with the features thereof, or a combination thereof.

19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A program stored in a recording medium for use by a computer based online shopping system to enable a user to search for and purchase an intended article from a number of articles, the program executing operations comprising:

previously generating/preparing article data in which features of an article picture and a data sending rank are related to each article picture as additional information;

upon receiving an article search by a user, generating article picture arrangement data of all search resultant article pictures in which the more similar features of the search resultant article pictures are to each other, the more closely the search resultant article pictures are disposed on a two-dimensional plane, said article picture arrangement data being independent of the data sending rank;

sending the article picture arrangement data to a user terminal;

sending the search resultant pictures in accordance with the data sending rank; and

at the user terminal, displaying each of the search resultant article picture at each arrangement position in accordance with the article picture arrangement data on a screen ~~of as~~ initial search results in a receiving order, thereby displaying an article picture with a higher data sending rank earlier at the arrangement position.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The program according to claim 19, wherein the features of the article are any one selected from the group consisting of features of an article picture of the article, a keyword representing the features of the article, and article classification information regarding classification of the article in accordance with the features thereof, or a combination thereof.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An online shopping method, comprising:

assigning a data sending rank relating at least one feature of an article picture to at least one feature of other pictures of articles and generating article picture arrangement data of all search resultant article pictures in which search resultant article pictures of articles with features

similar to each other are disposed at close positions on a two-dimensional plane, said data sending rank being independent of the article picture arrangement data; and

successively displaying each search resultant article picture as initial search results responsive to an article search request from a user based on the article picture arrangement data upon transmission in accordance with the data sending rank, and

wherein a search resultant article picture with a higher data sending rank is displayed earlier than a search resultant article picture with a lower data sending rank and the search resultant article pictures similar to each other are disposed in closest proximity to each other compared to other search resultant article pictures.

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An online shopping method, comprising:
receiving an article search request from a user and ranking article images ~~article search results~~ responsive to the article search request based on similarity of features of the article images;

transmitting search resultant article images in an order independent of said ranking; and
displaying the search resultant article images ~~of the~~ as initial article search results on a two-dimensional plane in accordance with the ranking so that search resultant article images corresponding to articles with similar features are positioned to be in adjacent positions among the displayed search resultant article images.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An online shopping method, comprising:
sorting search resultant images of articles retrieved in response to an article search request from a user and positioning search resultant images corresponding to articles having similar features in close proximity; and
providing the sorted images of the search resultant articles to the user as ~~a~~ an initial search result on a two-dimensional plane, where the articles having similar features are displayed as a unified group based on said sorting and transmitted based on a data sending rank independent of said sorting.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An online shopping method, comprising:
assigning display positions to article images based on similarity of articles shown in said article images and inputs of the providers; and
displaying the article images ~~responsive to~~ as an initial result of a search request in

accordance with said display positions assigned prior to the search request, where articles having similar features are positioned in adjacent positions and said display positions are independent of a sending order of the article images.

25. (NEW) An online shopping method, comprising:

sorting pictures of articles matching a search request prior to providing a result in response to the search request; and

transmitting said pictures according to a sending rank regardless of an order of said sorting and displaying said pictures based on said sorting as the result, where said pictures are displayed so that pictures of articles having similar features are positioned adjacent to each other.